

Concord Feb. 15<sup>th</sup> 1844

Dear Sir,

I have not forgotten your note which I received sometime since. Though I live in the woods, I am not so attentive an observer of birds as I was once, but am satisfied if I go an occasional night of my round from them. My pursuits at present are such that I am not very likely to meet with any specimens which you will not have obtained. Moreover, I can give but a little squeamishness on the score of robbing their nests, though I could easily go to the length of abstracting an egg or two gently, now and then, and if the advancement of science obviously demanded it might be carried even to the extreme of deliberate murder.

I have no doubt that you will preserve a greater number of species in or near the College yard than I can here. I have

noticed that in an open country  
where there are but few trees, there  
are more attractions for many  
species of birds than in a wooded one.  
They not only find food there in  
greater abundance, but protection  
against birds of prey, and even if  
they are no more numerous than else-  
where, the few trees are necessarily  
more crowded with nests. Many  
of my classmates were quite suc-  
cessful in collecting birds nests  
and eggs, and they did not have  
to go far from the college-yard  
to find them - I remember a  
pigeon woodpecker's nest in <sup>the</sup> ~~front~~  
on the east side of the yard, which  
annually yielded a number of eggs  
to collectors, while the bird steadily  
supplied the loss like a hen, until  
my chain demolished the hole with  
a hatchet. I found another  
in the next field shipped nearly two  
feet into a solid stump. And in  
one of the fields near the yard  
I used to visit daily in the winter  
the dwelling of an ermine-weasel

1. a hollow apple tree. But of course one must be a great traveller than this if he could make anything but a complete collection.

There are many whippoorwills & owls about my house, and I perhaps with a little pains one might find their nests. I hope you have more accurate and enquiring eyes to serve you than mine now are - However, if I should chance to stumble on any rarer nest I will not forget your request. If you come & board again, as I understand you sometimes do, I shall be glad to see you at any rate.

Trusting that you will feather your own nest comfortably without stripping those of the birds quite bare - I am

Yours &c  
Henry D. Thoreau.

Henry D. Thoreau  
Concord  
Mass.

Colony Oct 15<sup>th</sup> 1847.

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Walter B. Hoar

14 North Street

Boston

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